

The Westend Weekly

Bringing Communities Together



Box 66, 303 Fifth St., Rainy River, ON P0W 1L0 Ph. 807-852-3815, Fax. 807-852-1863, Email. westendweekly@tbaytel.net Vol. 21, No. 42 Wednesday, February 12, 2014
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Rainy River High School students host arts festival



Kim Desserre, mother of Jordan who is one of the originators of the event, enjoys the fruits of his and fellow students' hard work.

The first ever Rainy River High School Arts Festival and Auction held on Feb 7th from 7:00 to 10:00 pm was a phenomenal success. Approximately \$1600.00 was raised in total from admissions, auction proceeds and donations.

The night started with people coming in and viewing art from community members and students. This was followed by

a program of live entertainment. Emcees for the night were Jeffery Marchuk and Jordan Desserre who introduced the entertainers. Performances started off with Jeff and Emily Fraser singing songs from Phantom of the Opera accompanied by Jacquie Dufresne playing the piano. Next, Abbie Pearson read her poem "Self Doubt and Sadness" and this



Melissa Vellieux of International Falls questions carver and collector Jennifer Martin of Rainy River about one of the pieces she has brought.

was followed by Adam, Camille and Bob Johnson singing and playing instruments. This musical family was then followed by Hunter Nielson reading his poem "Lost at Sea" and then the drama club came forward to perform a one minute skit of Cinderella and play an entertaining game of "Lines from a Hat". After the audience managed to stop laughing Abigail Tolen sang "Grenade" alongside Kira Olsen who was playing the piano. This was followed by Jeffery Marchuk reading his poem "The Road Home" and the entertainment concluded with Victoria Lindal singing "All I Want."

The auction began with volunteer auctioneer James Doyle auctioning off 37 pieces of student made and donated art. With competitive bidding and fierce competition, all the art sold for amazing prices. The highest bids went to two floral paintings by local artist Bob Sawchuk. The emcees thanked everyone and the night came to a very successful conclusion.

This event would not have been possible without the as-

sistance of so many people. Much appreciation goes out to volunteer auctioneer James Doyle, Christine Brown for set up ideas, design and picture matting, Robert Sawchuk and Kristie Tesarsky for donating and displaying their artwork, Rebecca Wood, Jennifer Martin, Jeff and Emily Fraser, Jacquie Dufresne, Mary O'Connor, Donald Young School, John Laplante, Katherine Williams, Nicole Armstrong, Lisa George, James Chorney, Cathy Seguin, Dan Mack,



Katelyn Gaul enjoys a juicy dipped carrot with her mom Lisa Mosher.



Many wonderful works were displayed for attendees to enjoy. Students provided pieces of art for everyone to bid on.

Rachel Copenace, Beaver Mills Market and Rainy River Student Council.

A special thanks go to the Arts Festival Committee for all their hard work and dedication towards this event. Finally to Jeff Marchuk, who stuck with me the entire time; Jeff did everything he could and more to help out so I am eternally

grateful for that. The final thank you goes to the attendees. This event would have been nothing without you or your support. Thank you for making the first Rainy River High School Arts Festival and Auction a huge success.

Story submitted by Laura Armistead, pictures by Emily Frazer



Following a tour through the artistic offerings there was time to visit and enjoy many tasty treats brought in by the students before the entertainment and auction began.

Photographers' showcase



Sun Pillars usually occur right before sunrise or right after sunset. They are caused by millions of ice crystals in the atmosphere reflecting light from the sun which is below or near the horizon. This photo was taken at sunset.

Photo by Lauri Kangas, Fort Frances

New owner at the Roadside



Kelly Berg in her new dining room next to a painting by her grandmother.

by Jacquie Dufresne

Kelly Berg was born and raised in Rainy River. Following a few years away, she returned to discover there wasn't much opportunity for employment.

Most ideas begin with a problem that needs to be solved. Kelly said "I needed a job and as the Roadside was for sale I decided to explore the possibility of purchasing it". It took about a year to work the kinks out she told me, but finally things came together; "I made the offer and it was accepted".

Now for the hard part- teaching herself how to run a restaurant. Help came from different sources, including the former owners, but mainly a lot of research on the internet.

So, with a plan in hand, she dove right in. The first step was remodeling. The dining room is fresh and new featur-

ing a wonderful portrait of a violinist by her grandmother, Vera McQuaig, a well known local artist who passed away almost two years ago. Several other paintings by the amazing artist appear throughout the restaurant.

The cafe/coffee shop part of the restaurant is also fresh and new in part thanks to Kelly's Uncle, Chipper Berg, a meticulous drywall expert who sadly passed away unexpectedly just recently. "Uncle Chipper will always be a part of this. He will really be missed."

The next order of business was to extend the hours of operation. "We are quite busy at supper time", Kelly said. The restaurant formerly closed at six but as the majority of the supper crowd comes in between six and seven, the place is open as late as necessary to accommodate everyone.

They'll also reorganize their schedule for any party and group bookings. Right now they are closed on Sunday but Kelly said by this summer that should change. She is planning to work with the owners of the Motel next door to make sure she is open whenever their clientele needs her to be.

Kelly's mom Vicki Atkin is also helping her in many ways, most especially by making the fresh home baked pies and other goodies on the menu as well as most of the daily specials and soup. Our specials are really popular Kelly said and one that is surprising is meat loaf. Every day it's something different but always home made. Others include BBQ baby back ribs, fresh walleye, chicken pot pie, lasagna and more.

Kelly is doing a lot of the menu cooking herself. I asked how, without a background in a restaurant kitchen, she can handle multiple orders without panicking. She said "I get into a groove and just do it".

There are lots of plans for the future but she is wisely taking one small step at a time. The bar area is still a work in progress but in the future she hopes to take advantage of the big screen TV she's installed and offer appetizers and baskets. A plan for catering events is also in the works. And, of course, as time goes on she'll be offering a more extensive menu.

So now's the time for thinking, dreaming, planning and lots of hard work.



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